

*****FINAL MINUTES*****
Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
Richmond, Virginia
Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2006

Members Present: Terry Grimes, Chris Harrison, Mark Lester, Ward Marsteller, Irene Rebholz, Lisa Ritchie, Mark Stevens

For portions: Maureen Hollowell

Members Absent: Lisa DuVal, Scott DuVal, Vicki Fisher, Byron Stith

Staff Present: Sherry Confer, Colleen Miller, Lisa Shehi

Guests Present: Lavoy Bray, Cathy Hill, Marcus Planet

Call to Order/Welcome/ Introductions: The meeting was called to order by Chris Harrison, Chair, at 10:04 a.m. Mr. Harrison welcomed attendees and asked members, guests, and staff to introduce themselves.

Public Comment/ Announcements: Marcus Planet thanked the VOPA Council for work being done on behalf of individuals with mental illness in the community. Mr. Planet noted that he has noticed that he has been treated with more dignity and more respect as well as not being forced to take medications against his will.

Mr. Planet brought one concern to the attention of the Council, noting that it appears that individuals with mental illness are being criminalized. He explained that he is aware of staff at Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute in Marion, Virginia, requesting that individuals sign up for court-ordered treatment before they are discharged. Sherry Confer, VOPA Policy Director, shared with the Council and guests that VOPA re-establishes the Objectives within which staff work on an annual basis. Ms. Confer explained that Council participation in this process is vital and all public comment taken at Council meetings are taken into consideration in the planning of upcoming Objectives.

Cathy Hill, of the Office of Inspector General, offered a request to consider regarding a study on adult mental health case management services in the community being facilitated by the Office of the Inspector General. Ms. Hill noted that if suggestions for items to include in the study could be e-mailed to her for consideration. Ms. Hill provided her e-mail address: cathy.hill@oig.virginia.gov.

Council Training:

- **“How a Bill Becomes a Law-Points of Advocacy Opportunities”**

Sherry Confer provided training on the process by which a bill becomes a law in Virginia and identified where points of advocacy exist in the process.

Approval of November 2005 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Harrison requested that the Council members review the minutes from the August meeting. Lisa Ritchie noted a correction of the Members Present to include her attendance. There being no further changes, Ms. Ritchie made a MOTION to adopt the minutes as amended. Terry Grimes SECONDED the MOTION and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

Board of Directors Update:

Colleen Miller noted that the Board of Directors met on January 20, 2006, with the Internal Policy Committee meeting on January 19, 2006. The next Board meeting is April 25, 2006 and will be held at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, Virginia.

Executive Director's Update:

Colleen Miller, Executive Director, updated the Council on the General Assembly actions relevant to the Council's concerns.

Ms. Miller discussed the Progress on Priorities report, provided in the Council packet, and took questions from the Council. Specifically, Ms. Miller noted investigative work at a nursing home, significant outreach has been done in the areas of southwest Virginia and the Eastern Shore, and the launch of the Employment

In litigation referred Council members to the Litigation Report and reviewed selected cases in more detail.

Ms. Miller summarized the financial reports which reflect VOPA's solid financial condition.

Working Lunch:

The Council observed a working lunch from 12:08 until 12:44.

Mental Health Consumer Groups Outreach:

Ms. Confer distributed a copy of the FY2006 Goals, Focus Areas, and Objectives, noting that the PAIMI Council had shared concerns that individuals in the mental health consumer groups who are not aware of VOPA advocacy efforts for individuals with mental health issues. We wrote into the objectives to develop the best ways to collaborate with those groups. Ms. Confer requested suggestions from Council members regarding outreach opportunities. Council members identified consumer-run organizations to contact. The Council members encouraged VOPA outreach to consumer-run organizations versus provider-run organizations.

Membership:

The membership profile provided in the packet reflected changes as noted at the November 2005 meeting. Ms. Confer distributed a draft recruitment "announcement" and expansion plan for the Council to review and asked for suggestions from the Council of other ways to recruit new members.

Ms. Confer also discussed moving the meetings, allowing them to be held in multiple areas statewide in one year. The Council discussed opportunities to share the work of the PAIMI Council in lieu of holding meetings. Ms. Confer asked the Council to consider maintaining the schedule as currently scheduled, with one meeting in Richmond and the remainder in Charlottesville, for 2006, and reviewing meeting sites for the next year.

Ms. Confer reminded the Council that the next meeting has been planned as a joint leadership training opportunity with the Disabilities Advisory Council. At this time, no date or location has been confirmed for that meeting. After discussion, Ms. Confer offered to poll members of both Councils for to determine best dates, locations, and topics of leadership training.

Mr. Harrison asked if VOPA was aware of how other protection and advocacy systems' PAIMI Councils stand in regards to retention of members. Ms. Confer noted that she would follow-up on that and discussion of bylaws could be added to the next Council meeting.

Other Business:

Council members were reminded to complete and turn in their Expense Reimbursement Vouchers.

Chris Harrison presented Mark Lester, whose term expires this month, with a plaque and certificate in appreciation and recognition of his service to the Council.

There being no further business, Irene Rebholz made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Mark Stevens SECONDED the MOTION and it passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

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August 17, 2006